

REMARKS

Claims 1-31 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1, 6 and 24 have been amended. Support for the amendment to claims 1, 6 and 24 can be found in Figs. 1 and 2, for example.

Claims 1-28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over JP-A-4-22976 (JP'976). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

JP'976 fails to disclose a process cartridge, wherein a height of the image carrier is less than or equal to a height of the hopper, as recited in claim 1 and as similarly recited in claim 24. The arrangement recited in claims 1 and 24 thus allows for a process cartridge with a reduced height.

JP'976 discloses an image forming apparatus with a photosensitive drum 10, a charging roller 11 and a developing device 12 (Fig. 1). Although not labeled, a hopper that stores developing agent is included in the developing device 12. As clearly illustrated in Fig. 1, a height of the photosensitive drum 10 is not less than or equal to a height of the developing device 12.

JP'976 fails to disclose an image forming apparatus, wherein (1) the charger is located at a first section of the four sections and the developing member is located at a second section of the four sections that is opposite to the first section, and (2) the charger is not disposed above the image carrier, as recited in claim 6.

JP'976 discloses an image forming apparatus with a photosensitive drum 10, a charging roller 11 and a developing device 12 (Fig. 1). As clearly illustrated in Fig. 1, the charging roller 11 is above the photosensitive drum 10. JP'976 thus fails to disclose a charger that is not disposed above an image carrier, and fails to disclose all of the features recited in claim 6.

JP'976 also fails to disclose a process cartridge, wherein the charger is located along a straight line that connects the photosensitive drum shaft and the developing roller shaft, as recited in claim 24.

Although JP'976 discloses a photosensitive drum 10 and a developing device 12, JP'976 fails to disclose a shaft (photosensitive drum shaft and a developing device shaft) for either device. JP'976 thus fails to disclose the charging roller 11 located along a straight line that connects the photosensitive drum 10 shaft and the developing device 12 shaft.

The shafts would logically be located at the center of the photosensitive drum 10 and the developing device 12. However, even if the shafts are located at the center, the charging roller 11 would not be located along a straight line that connects the photosensitive drum 10 shaft and the developing device 12 shaft. JP'976 thus fails to disclose a charger that is located along a straight line that connects the photosensitive drum shaft and the developing roller shaft, as recited in claim 24.

It is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

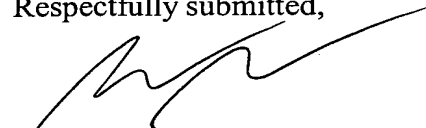
Claims 29-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over JP'976 in view of Sato et al. (Sato), U.S. Patent No. 6,385,414. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Sato fails to overcome the deficiencies of JP'976 as applied to claims 1, 6 and 24. It is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Scott M. Schulte
Registration No. 44,325

JAO:SMS/axl

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OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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